



# Oblates of Saint Benedict

**A Letter from the Oblate Director - Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.**

**Dear Oblate Brothers & Sisters:**

Throughout the Old Testament and New Testament we learn how difficult it was for the people to hear the 'Word of God'. The prophets were killed to silence the 'Word of God'. In the New Testament we see that even with Jesus speaking the Word of God, people had a hard time hearing. Often times Christ's words were in sharp contrast to what the Pharisees tried to teach. Today do we hear the Word of God? Are we even listening? The scenery may have changed but the message is still applicable for us in the 21st century.

When listening to scripture do we try to understand? When the word is proclaimed are our hearts and minds open to God's voice? What stops us from hearing and understanding? Am I too arrogant, believing I know it all? Am I lazy and just don't wish to push the envelope to learn and grow closer to the Lord. Am I afraid of the unknown? Or, is it that I just don't want to take the time for that "God stuff".

People are so busy these days and the excuses are numerous. There is so much entertainment and so many methods of plugging our ears or drowning out the silence that we lose the messages we ought to give ear to. How can we put aside the outside pressures or obstacles to our faith? Learning to be a disciple is setting aside some time each day for prayer, spiritual reading or listening to audio books. If the spiritual body suffers so, too the physical body and mind suffer. Our world is suffering terribly, because societies are spiritually sick and dying because they are abandoning their creator and trying to go on their own. Thus they are centered on themselves, making themselves into a god. We can't do it on our own. The truth is before us; feel it, see it, touch it. If we don't know the truth it may be because we have not been open enough to receive it, or have not heard it. Now is the time for evangelization of self and others.

The Church is flooding publishers with remarkable books on this subject. Please take advantage of these scholarly works. I hope to list some resources in this newsletter. With Easter near please invest time and money into getting acquainted with Jesus and reap the rewards.

With Easter Joy *Br. Edmund E., O.S.B.*

Easter  
Joy

## Abbot's Reflection - Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.

By the time you read this article, the Solemnity of the Passing of our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot, will also have passed!

Every year when we mark this feast, I am thankful for Benedict and the legacy that he left us. I think he should be the saint of common sense and perseverance. Even if I had not become a Benedictine monk, I would still hail Benedict as one of my favorite saints. Why? Benedict knew and understood human behavior and the ordinary difficulties of the common person. It is all in the Rule. Benedict legislates that the Rule be read to the newcomer (novice) three times in the novitiate year. In Chapter 66, he writes: "We wish this Rule to be read often in the community, so that none of the brothers can offer the excuse of ignorance." Benedict was shrewd! He knew that future abbots would have to remind monks often of the challenges and obligations in the Rule. At our monastery, one chapter of the Rule is read every day after our evening meal. The wisdom of the Rule needs to be repeated often and I encourage you, as Oblates, to become familiar with the Rule.

Perfection is never accomplished by doing anything just once any more than we achieve full knowledge of spiritual perfection after reading the Bible once. Most monks would admit that they still don't live perfectly according to the Rule. It takes years of practice. Clearly, the Rule teaches us to be practical, to be moderate, and to be unchanging in our perseverance, to love scripture, prayer, the psalms, and the liturgy, to see Christ in all persons, to be charitable. Benedict wants us to take care of our bodies as well, and so much more. It is all in the Rule and it is there for Oblates as well to adapt and apply to their situation in the world.

Benedict's Rule is the school where we can learn all sorts of things that will aid anyone to live a virtuous, ordered and spiritually fruitful life. The Rule lived genuinely rewards one with great peace. All in all, Benedict did rather well before leaving this world and so can we if we make use of this "little Rule for beginners", this little Rule for ordinary people!





## In the Beginning - Father Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

March, 1955 came in like a lion with very heavy snow. (Some in the Lacey area may recall the blizzard of March 20 in 1966!) Even so, **Father Michael Feeney (1919-2000)** was the main speaker on March 1 at a meeting of the ladies of Visitation parish in Tacoma.... On March 5, **Father Marian Esterman (1874-1957)** returned to the abbey following a three-month parish assignment in Merritt, British Columbia.... On Mar. 8, **Brother Boniface Baggenstos (1889-1958)** went to the hospital for a check-up in light of two weeks of poor health. The exam revealed no serious illness, although he died of cancer 3 1/2 years later.... On Mar. 12, **Father Clement Pangratz** replaced **Father Eugene Kellenbenz (1917-1982)** at Holy Rosary parish in Tacoma as **Father Eugene** was down with the flu.... On March 13, Forty Hours' Devotion closed, the students having been very faithful during the last three days.

Holy Week and Easter assignments called forth every available priest: Father **Luke O'Donnell (1913-1999)** to Saint Michael's, Olympia; **Father Damian Glenn (1907-1986)** to Everett; **Fathers Leonard Feeney (1908-1980)** and **Richard Cebula (1916-2004)** to Queen of Angels, Port Angeles; **Father David Prebula (1918-2009)** to Visitation, Tacoma; **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)** to Saint John the Baptist, Cle Elum; **Father Michael Feeney** to Arlington; **Father Dunstan Curtis (1921-1981)** to Snoqualmie; **Father Timothy Lamm** to Edmonds; and **Father Urban Feucht (1927-2013)**, a deacon, to Saint Edward, Shelton.

During Lent, the number of communions at the parish of Assumption in Seattle was so great that pastor **Father Alcuin Lawrence (1906-1984)** required the services of a fourth priest: **Father Marcel Berthon (1899-1975)**. The Lenten season was rather quiet in the college halls - a time to focus on studies - but a dance on Saint Patrick's Day at Dunstan Hall drew a good crowd. The college men were taking whole-hearted support in Lenten exercises: daily Mass, stations and Benediction on Tuesday evenings, sermon and Benediction on Thursday evenings - to say nothing of daily rosary after supper, which **Father Gerard Kirsch** attended as a high school student, even being allowed at times to lead one of the Mysteries.

Commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the original monastery: on 12 April 1895, a team of horses with a plow turned the first soil, thus beginning excavation. The teamster was Carl Hochhaus, receiving \$2 per day. The bricks for the basement story cost \$5.40 "a load". Stephen Tschida had charge of the plastering at 5 cents per square yard, for 6600 square yards. Carpenters, brick layers and painters got \$2 a day and board, laborers and lathers \$1 a day and board. Mrs. Hochhaus, the teamster's wife, was cook for this crew. Exactly 18 years later (April 12, 1913) concrete for the foundations of Old Main, south wing, was poured, 4 stories, 200 by 60 feet. C. Frank Mahon of Tacoma was the architect for this Collegiate Gothic structure.

## From the Hill - Boniface V. Lazzari, O.S.B.

“Waiting can be a gift of free time or it can be a misery. I decide.” We have recently completed the forty days of Lent, our period of preparation for Easter. Has Lent been “a misery” or has it been “a gift” from God facilitating our spiritual growth? He has risen! Let endless hallelujahs resound!

During the final days of Lent, **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** presided at the installation and blessing of the newest addition to the Abbey’s Martin of Tours Collection of PNW Art. Installed on the second floor of Old Main, it is a stained glass depiction of Saint Martin of Tours on horseback dividing his great cloak with a beggar. The artist is the well-known Simon Kogan. The Abbot and monastic community hosted about forty-five people at the installation/blessing and artist’s reception which followed.



The stained glass Martin of Tours joins two other Abbey depictions of our patron. One is a bas-relief, also equestrian, by the Grand Staircase. This was acquired by the late **BROTHER HUGH EVANS** in the early 1950’s. The other, depicting Martin as bishop of Tours, is in the abbey church. It was carved of wood by Bruno LaVerdiere late in the 1950’s, when he was still “**Brother Bruno**” and a member of the monastic community. Our late confrere **FATHER LUKE O’DONNELL** wrote a monograph on Saint Martin which the late **ABBOT RAHAEL HEIDER** had printed on the abbey’s printing press.



Good news has been received from **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE**. The dissertation proposal that he has presented to his committee at G.T.U., Berkeley, where he is working on a doctorate in theology, has been accepted! **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL**, philosopher and musician par excellence, has been granted a year’s sabbatical by the university and has been approved by **ABBOT NEAL** and the Abbey’s Board of Directors to spend the next academic year in Berkeley and then in Germany. **FATHER GEORGE** will be continuing his scholarly work on the German intellectual Martin Heidegger...**ABBOT NEAL** was in attendance when the Knights of Columbus honored **FATHER THADDAEUS ARLEDGE**. **FATHER TADDAEUS** is a scholarly monk whose career has included both education and pastoral ministry in the Seattle Archdiocese. Something of a Germanophile, he continues to read spiritual and scholarly works in German, which he once taught at Saint Martin’s College... Our nonagenarian confrere **FATHER CLEMENT PANGRATZ** has been enjoying short walks in the lovely springtime sun. **FATHER CLEMENT** is the community’s piano accompanist at Sunday evening Compline...**BROTHER MARTIN DE PORRES DINH** is enrolled in classes in the University’s religious studies and biological sciences departments. **BROTHER MARTIN** is gifted gardener and loves plants. Like **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE**, he has a small Bonsai collection...**BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON**, an active member of the monastic schola, could easily work in I.T. He is very skilled in handling computers and his skills are frequently called on by his confreres with recalcitrant computers. Please continue to keep the health heads of **FATHER ALFRED HULSCHER** and **BROTHER LAWRENCE VOGEL** in your prayers. Both are currently in residence at Providence Mother Joseph in Olympia.

*He has risen! Let endless hallelujahs resound!*



## A Spring Blizzard Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

"...today the petals seem like snow."

Fan Yun (451-505)

The crab apple trees are  
beyond full blossom,  
pink and white  
petals opened  
to capacity  
in anticipation  
of a gentle breath  
to toy with upraised arms.

And  
soon a whisper stirs  
through their hands,  
a thousand flakes  
begin to fall,  
hushing the earth,  
a silent padding  
to cover winter's sins,  
a snowy reminder  
that someday winter  
will return.



## **Stability and the Oblate by Oblate Mary Randall**

As I listened to Br. Nicolaus Wilson's recent talk on stability giving his own insights into that word, I had flashbacks of my own experiences with stability. I remember so vividly the day I signed my name (on the Abbey's altar) promising to be an Oblate of Saint Benedict with stability to Saint Martin's Abbey. Oh, how I wanted to run that day as far from the Abbey as possible. I knew that making that promise would change my life. Little did I know how much it would change my life and for the better!

My second flashback to stability came when 20 of us Oblates made the same promise within two years of each other. Yet, as time marched on each of the others one by one left. For years I asked myself, "Why do I stay? What holds me to this promise and to the Abbey?" But then, after a long while I quit asking the question. I was on a journey whether others stayed or not. I was learning first hand what it meant to be stable "to stay put."

As Oblates of Saint Martin's Abbey we have been blessed to have so many members of the monastic community share with us their insights into the Rule of Benedict and how it has shaped their lives. Their sharing give us hope as we work in the secular world bringing the peace of Christ and the Rule of Benedict to many who are searching. Saint Benedict of Nursia pray for us, Saint Martin of Tours pray for us. Keep us safe and true to the meaning of the word stability. May others join our ranks as monks and Oblates holding true to the richness of the Rule and what it means to our stable community.



"The Catholic Men's Conference: Iron Sharpens Iron " is scheduled April 25 in Renton at St. Stephen's Martyr Church. Men of all ages are encouraged to attend. Br. Edmund will be attending and have Oblate Information table available for those interested. More information can be found at [www.seattlemensconference.org](http://www.seattlemensconference.org)



## More on Stability... Oblate Patricia McClure

After reading Mary's insights into stability, I decided to add yet another testimony to what stability means in this world of rapid pace and, more importantly, to me. I too remember making the promise to be stable. A promise, for the most part that has not been too hard to keep. Having grown up in one house until I left for college, and after graduating, moving back home. Then, as the years passed I moved closer to my Benedictine community. I now live minutes away and have for over 20 years.

What stability means to me is what ever endeavor I commit to I will follow through to the end. Being close to the abbey is my spiritual stability, for I know they are there, in good times and bad, and that they are praying for my welfare and the welfare of all of us.

Mary asked the question why do I stay? And I liked that question, having asked that myself at times. My answer is where else would I go? Where else would I find people who value and respect life, who strive to be filled with passion and desire, who act on that for betterment of all? Here, at St. Martin's (and St. Placid's) that is where those people are and for me that is why I stay and am stable.

Image found at [www.flowers-kid.com](http://www.flowers-kid.com)



## Hope... Oblate Bill Lagreid

Hope is a four-letter word that means optimism. Without it living at this time as in all times is and has been pessimistic and depressing. Since the beginning, humans have looked with hope to an unseen power greater than themselves for answers to the sounds, power, and effect of nature at times in their lives. That quest takes many forms from total self-reliance in all matters to faith in the unseen Being, believing there will be a better time and place for each of us.

Today there are those, we may be among them, searching with hope in their personal situations and in the unknown future because of illness or loss of once believed security. Our strength comes from our faith in a loving God who sent his son to teach us the way to salvation from the pressures and influence of life in our time on this earth. Our obligation as Christian Benedictine Oblates is to do what ever we can to bring hope, consolation and compassion into the lives of members of our personal and parish families who are in need of kind words, prayers, cards, letters, e-mails and our physical presence when and wherever we are needed.

At our Act of Oblation we dedicated ourselves to the service of God and humanity according to the Rule of St. Benedict in so far as our state in life permits. Bringing words of faith and hope, to those during times of their need is one way we demonstrate that we believe what we say by what we do with our time, presence, and works.

Our optimism and hope is a demonstration of our faith in God in the present and future. We share with others by acting on what we believe and doing what we are committed to.

Because we are human each of us will face the time and places in our lives when the feeling of hope is missing and optimism seems hopeless. Let us believe that there will be someone there to bring hope back into our minds and hearts. Until then let us be the messengers.



## 5th week of Lent by Oblate William Archer

I'd be outside saying my morning prayers, but it's sprinkling lightly. Dark clouds overhead, but none near the horizon—the sun has free access to the backyard. Tomorrow is Palm Sunday. At mass we'll wave branches and sing hosannas. One week later—one Holy Week later—the Lenten fast will be over, the Son will rise and we'll sing, and shout, and pray the other word again, the one that starts with the letter A.

The cherry tree is in the height of glory, its white blossoms silently reprimanding the sun, "We've been up all night; it's about time you showed up!" The sunrise responds with a golden bath, and for a few moments the 3-day-old dogwood blossoms claim center stage. The new maple by the bamboo pond is small still, but the blood red leaves hint of the Good Friday that is coming in six days. I won't even try to describe the colors on the hummingbird (We've named him Rufus.). He lands on the feeder next to the garden room window.

In the middle of this scene—the flickering reflection from the flames of the candles in my oratory—the invitatory psalm rising like smoke before his throne.

The Lord is God, the mighty God,  
the great king over all the gods.  
He holds in his hands the depths of the earth  
and the highest mountains as well  
He made the sea; it belongs to him,  
the dry land, too, for it was formed by his hands.

I didn't always love spring. The first hints came when I was about 13 or 14 years old, standing outside the old Jr. High during lunch break. I had been sick a lot that winter with colds and a persistent cough. While visiting with some of my buddies, the sun peaked through the clouds and for the first time in several months made its warmth felt. How embarrassing it would be for a teenage boy to start crying in front of his buddies. So I didn't, of course, but my eyes did turn moist and I wondered why.

For a long time I thought I hated the other seasons, winter especially with its short days and long nights, but I've come to realize that I don't. I love them all—summer, fall, winter, spring. Just mostly spring. 1000 times more, at least. All of the seasons have their beauty and each one has a certain "feel" to it that I love. But for me spring in this backyard garden has taken on a kind of sacramental role—a time and a place in time and space where the eternal touches the temporal, the endless touches the dying. In this humble backyard, this holy place, I see him because I see his reflection in what he has made. But it's more than that. I also see his work that timeless work begun on the hill, Golgotha, and finished three days later with the stone rolled away. Behold, he makes all things new. I look through a window darkly, and through that window I see a picture. It is a picture of his resurrection and a picture of the hope of my future resurrection.

I pause in the middle of Psalm 95 and whisper to him. I love you and I love what you have made. And he answers. If you think you love this, just wait...

## May 3rd Oblate Recollection Sunday

Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11 A.M.

Followed by brunch, for purchase, in the student cafeteria (St. Gertrude's Hall).

At 1:30 a presentation in the Abbey Church by Fr. Justin McCreedy on St. Francis of Rome, the patroness of Oblates.

Spring Bazaar is a fund raiser for the Oblate Program. Please donate hand-made items: pies, cookies, needle or woven items, slightly used items, etc. We will set up tables on the lawn area across the road from the Church so deliver your donations here before 11 a.m. Mass on May 3. Pray for fair weather. Thank You.

## Mark your Calendars

### Oblate Sunday Conferences

July 12th Picnic

**Oblate retreat :** August 8th 2015 Lambert Lodge

Sept. 6th fall Bazaar

Dec. 6th

NW NAABOD regional meeting is scheduled for Aug. 26 — 28 2016 at St. Gertrude's

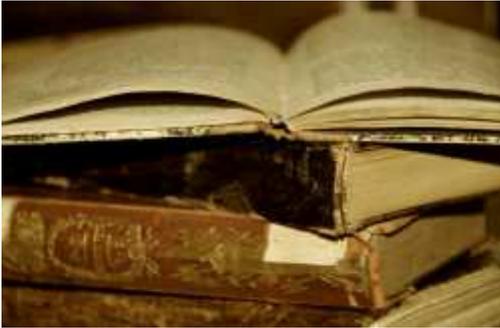


Image found at [www.stgertrudes.org](http://www.stgertrudes.org)

Monastery of Cottonwood, Idaho. Three Oblates will be selected to join the Director to attend this meeting. We will most likely carpool together and share costs. Hopefully, the Oblate budget will pay for our attendance fee. The theme will be, "Oblate Leadership and Support for the Cenobite Community of the Future". Please let the Director know if you are interested in this journey. You should be willing to take on a leadership role with the Oblates.



## On the Book Shelf



*Evangelizing Catholics: A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization* by Scott Hahn

*Scripture Matters: Essays on Reading the Bible from the Heart of the Church* by Scott Hahn

*John: The Sacramental Gospel (6-CD)* by Scott Hahn

Image found at [dailynews.com](http://dailynews.com)

## Prayer Requests

**Thanks for the Prayers** Tom Ebbers, Br. Lawrence, and Fr. Alfred, all are doing better.

**Prayers for the recently passed: Oblate Trudy Scott**

**Pray for Oblate M.J. Jorgenson's friend.**

**For all ill and dying Oblates.**

**For vocations to St. Martin's Abbey.**

## Abbey Church Events

Events are not ticketed. Freewill donation is suggested.

April 11th at 8 p.m. Mischa Bouvier - Baritone and Yegor Shevtsov — Piano.

**\*Items available for purchase to support the Oblate Program:**

The grocery bags are in. Very nicely done with the front and back of the Benedictine medallion printed on one side. Colors are red and black . We have medals, rosaries, lavender, jackets, calendars, crosses etc... The sales of these items support the works of the Oblate Program.

## Good Works

**Prison Ministry:** If you are interested in being a Pen Pal to a prison inmate, please contact Brother Edmund. This ministry can be as simple as mailing a card of encouragement and prayers.

**Lambert Lodge:**

9:30 to 3:30.

Please plan to assist in the cleaning and sprucing up of Lambert Lodge :

October 10th 9:30 to 3:30.

This is a Potluck day so bring something to share.



**Gardening and Wood:**

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm

When we are not cleaning the lodge or making rosaries there is the much needed work of stacking, cutting, delivering wood, and gardening.

**Rosary Work.**

Saturdays, 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main across from the Monastery refectory.

Rosary makers and twine cutters are needed. Come tie a knot with us.

2015

April 11th, May 2nd, June 6th, July 11th, Aug. 1st, Sept. 5th, Oct. 3rd, Nov. 7th, Dec. 5th.

Image found at [blog.wood-furnaces.net](http://blog.wood-furnaces.net)

For more details on any of these activities contact Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

E-mail: [br\\_edmund@stmartin.edu](mailto:br_edmund@stmartin.edu)

Phone: 360-438-4457

Correspondence:

St. Martin's Abbey

5000 Abbey Way SE

**Advisor's Meeting:**

Oblate director Brother Edmund and the board of advisors will be meeting:

Saturday May 2nd, July 11th, Sept. 5th, Dec. 5th

at 10 a.m. in St Gertrude's Hall.

The current advisors are Oblates Gavin Machutchin, Bene Reece, J.J. Nugent, Carmen Hertel, Tom Ward, Chi Chi Nwankwo, and Patricia McClure.



**Ignite Your Torch: July 30 –Aug. 2, 2015** A program for Youth to held here at St. Martin's University. More information can be found at [ignitenw.org/](http://ignitenw.org/)

# EASTER BLESSINGS

## From your Director and St. Martin's Abbey



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